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INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
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RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 3132
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RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 0821
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 1395
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1367
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 2020
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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASHGABAT 001377

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STATE FOR SCA/CEN, DRL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/18/2017

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SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: ANOTHER FREEDOM-OF-MOVEMENT CASE

Classified By: CHARGE RICHARD E. HOAGLAND FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: The sister of a Turkmen exile opposition leader is being barred from leaving Turkmenistan and pressured to relinquish her Turkmen citizenship. Authorities barred her from boarding an aircraft bound for Moscow on November 24, and seem bent on convincing her to leave the country once and for all. In spite of the barriers they are creating for her, she is resisting their efforts, probably due to concerns about other relatives still in Turkmenistan. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) December 11 by Svetlana Orazova, sister of exile opposition leader Khudaiberdy Orazov, asked to see PolOff December 11. She claimed she had been denied permission to travel abroad on November 24 when her name was found in the Migration Service's database at the airport. Orazova, who is married and has three children, is the sister of Khudaiberdy Orazov, a former deputy prime minister of Turkmenistan and former Central Bank Chairman who now lives in Sweden. He founded and continues to head the exile opposition movement "Watan" and is an outspoken critic of the Government of Turkmenistan. After Orazov left Turkmenistan in 2001, the Niyazov government accused him of embezzling as much as \$120 million from the Central Bank, according to Internet press sources.

¶3. (C) On November 24, Svetlana Orazova had tickets to fly with her 3 year-old daughter to Moscow to visit her family over the holidays. She was able to buy the tickets, and passed through check-in and customs without a problem. When the migration service did a final check, however, her name was found in the database and she was not allowed to proceed further. She came to the Embassy on December 11 to ask for help in getting her name taken off the list so that she could travel. She showed poloff her valid tickets. She also reported that the security service and migration service have been pressuring her to give up her Turkmen citizenship. (Orazova currently holds dual Turkmen and Russian citizenship.) The migration and security services have told her that her name will not be removed from the travel restriction list until she chooses one citizenship and gives up the other.

¶4. (C) Orazova's husband was denied treatment for a heart condition earlier this year after hospital officials found his name on a list, but he was eventually able to travel to Moscow, where he underwent heart surgery. Two of Orazova's children are now studying in Russia as well. Her 19 year-old daughter was denied permission to travel in summer 2006 when she tried to return to China, where she was attending university. The government has focused negative attention on the family fairly consistently since 2002, according to Internet news sources. She and her husband have been routinely targeted since her brother's departure in 2001. In the past, they have been arrested, detained and questioned, surveilled, threatened, banned from foreign travel, and barred from travel outside of Ashgabat.

¶5. (C) COMMENT: Pressure on relatives of alleged criminals on the lam, though unexcusable, is common practice in authoritarian states. Since Orazova and her family have been harassed for a number of years, this case should not be seen as indicating an up-tick in freedom-of-movement problems in Turkmenistan. It is possible that the authorities are pressuring Orazova hoping she will choose Russian citizenship so that they can deny her access back into the country once she leaves. She made it clear, however, that she is not willing to give up her Turkmen citizenship. Although she did not share her reasons, it may be that she wants to be able to look after elderly relatives who live in Ashgabat and in Dashoguz. This reality, however, paints her into a corner, and limits her options. END COMMENT.
HOAGLAND